Mercy for the Worlds Series - No. 1

THE NEEDS OF HUMANITY

as Addressed by the Message of Prophet Muhammad

(Blessings and Peace be Upon Him)

Prepared by

The International Program
for Introducing the Prophet of Mercy

In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and blessings and peace be upon Muhammad ﷺ, seal of the prophets and messengers.

Some Westerners are presently asking what new aspects Prophet Muhammad ﷺ[1] offered to the world. Undoubtedly, all those who conveyed great messages were great in themselves, great in their lives. And although they appeared during specific periods of history, they left their mark, not only on their own societies, but on the history of the entire world.

Among them was our Prophet, Muhammad ﷺ.The outstanding feature of his greatness lies in the fact that he was the bearer of a divine monotheistic message. It was a comprehensive message aimed basically at the amendment of human life, shifting it from barbarism and paganism to a monotheistic civilization based on certainty of faith.

Will Durant, the American research scholar and author of “The Story of Civilization”, wrote:

"When we judge greatness by what effect a great person left on people, we could say that Muhammad ﷺ was one of the greatest figures in history. For he took it upon himself to elevate the spiritual and moral level of a people cast into the shadows of savagery by the heat and aridity of the desert. He succeeded in the realization of that goal on a scale never

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[1] Blessings and peace be upon him

achieved by any other reformer in history. Very seldom do we find someone who actually achieved that of which he dreamt. It was not merely because he was an extremely religious person, but because there was no influence other than that of religion which motivated the Arabs of that time to follow the path he pursued. When he began his mission, the land of Arabia was an arid desert inhabited by a few disunited polytheistic tribes. But by the time of his death it had become a unified, cohesive nation. He had tamed the anarchy of fanaticism and superstition and established a religion over Judaism, Christianity and the ancient beliefs of his land that was uncomplicated, lucid and powerful, a bastion of morality, honesty, valor and national honor. Within a single generation he was able to triumph in a hundred battles, to found a great nation within one century, and remain until this day a formidable power throughout half of the world."[2]

We, of the Program for Introducing the Prophet of Mercy ﷺ, consider it among our obligations to answer the questions pertaining to what Prophet Muhammad ﷺ offered to the world and to humanity with reference to the topics that follow.

[2] Will Durant, The Story of Civilization, 13/47.

The Worship of God Alone

Muhammad ﷺ through revelation from God (whose proper name in the Arabic language is "Allah")[3], transferred humanity from obedience and submission to other human beings to the worship and submission to Allah, the Exalted[4], alone, associating nothing with Himﷻ. Consequently, humanity became free from servitude to anyone other than Allahﷻ and that is the greatest honor bestowed on humanity.

The prevailing condition before Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ mission was a class system based on tribal loyalties, financial supremacy and slavery. The wealthy and influential leaders were masters to be obeyed and served, while the poor and colored (mostly blacks) were servants and submissive followers. Slaves were no more than material possessions which a person could own, buy, sell or give away without the least consideration of human feelings when separating a parent and child or a husband and wife through such dealings.

The masters of society would impose customs and conditions bordering on legislation, compelling the people to submit to them. They had set themselves up as

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[3] The meaning of *Allah* is "the one and only God" who alone is worthy of worship. Muslims use this name throughout the world regardless of their spoken language.

[4] Henceforth, the Arabic symbol will be used instead of the Exalted.

rivals in authority to the one true God, while He alone is worthy of worship and obedience. All people, whether white, black, rich, poor, highborn or slave should be subject only to the authority of Allah ﷻ and His judgement. It is for this purpose that He sent His Prophet, Muhammad ﷺ, with the message of Islam as represented in the testimony:

"There is no [true] god except Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."

Paganism was practiced in the form of idol worship, the worship of statues, trees and stones. In contrast, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ invited people to acknowledge the unity of God in His lordship, His divinity and His right to unconditional worship and obedience alone. For He ﷻ said in the *Qur'an:*

"O mankind, worship your Lord, who created you and those before you, that you may become righteous." (2:21)

And He ﷻ said:

"O people, an example is presented, so listen to it. Indeed, those you invoke besides Allah will never create as much as a fly, even if they gathered together for it. And if the fly should steal from them a [tiny] thing, they could not recover it from him. Weak are the pursuer and pursued."[5] (22:73)

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[5] A comparison is made to the worshipper of a false deity and that which he worships.

One of the Prophet's ﷺ companions described the transformation, which Islam brought to the life of the Arabs from dishonor and slavery to honor and dignity; how they left the darkness of servitude to people, for the worship of Allahﷻ alone. This enabled them to perceive the true scope and capacity of this world. As *Rab`i ibn `Amir* ؓ[6]said when addressing a Persian general,

"Allah has sent us to liberate whoever wishes, from the worship of His servants to the worship of Allahﷻ, from the restriction of this world to its vastness and from the tyranny of other religions to the justice of Islam."[7]

The Frenchman, Etienne Denier (who took the name "Nasiruddin"), speaks in his book entitled "Muhammad ﷺ, the Messenger of Allahﷻ" about the balance, universality and possible future role of the divine message. He says:

"A very important thing is the absence of an intermediary between a person and his Lord. This is what practical minded people find in Islam, due to its freedom from mystery and saint worship. It has no need for temples and shrines because all of the earth is a suitable place for the worship of God. Moreover, some of those who believe in God while expressing higher

[6] May Allah be pleased with him; (ؓ) this Arabic symbol will be used henceforth.
[7] Ibn Katheer, Al-Bidayah wan-Nihayah, 39/7.

aspirations can find in Islam a pure perspective regarding belief in God. They will find therein the most extraordinary and sublime acts of worship and unimaginable expressions of supplication."[8]

Liberation of the Mind from Superstition

Through revelation from God, Muhammad ﷺ liberated the human mind from superstition, deception and submission to false objects of worship as well as those concepts contrary to reason, such as the claim that God had a human son whom He sacrificed to atone for the sins of humanity.

Before the coming of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, the Arab mind was dominated by many beliefs and legends incompatible with sound reason and with intellect that cannot accept what is contrary to reason. One prominent belief of the pre-Islamic period of ignorance was that stone or wood carved by people with their own hands could benefit or harm them. So, they worshiped these along with Allah ﷻ or instead of Him. They feared their vengeance and intimidated their subordinates, who in turn closed their minds, unable to distinguish error from reality in such matters.

Then Allah ﷻ sent Prophet Muhammad ﷺ with the religion of Islam, which honored man through his intelligence and made him worthy of responsibility for

[8] Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, p.362-363.

religious obligations and prohibitions, while exempting the mentally deficient and the child who has not yet matured. Islam promotes and rewards one for using his mind to discover facts about the universe in the fields of science. And it prohibits everything which affects the clarity of the mind, such as various kinds of intoxicants and drugs.

Islam began by purifying religious doctrine from superstition and deception. Its creed addresses the mind, to convince it of the truth conveyed in the *Qur'an* and to refute the false beliefs of ignorant people, such as belief in the plurality of divinities. One example is in Allah's ﷻ statement:

"Allah has not taken any son, nor has there ever been with Him any deity. [If there had been], then each deity would have taken what it created, and some of them would have sought to overcome others. Exalted is Allah above what they describe." (23:91)

This clear argument in such concise words shows that the true God is a dynamic Creator who can benefit His servant and keep him from harm. So, if there had been more than one god, the other one would also have created and acted, so there would have been rivalry between them. One of them would then have overcome and seized the creation of the other, as do the kings of this world in their kingdoms. And when one is unable to subdue the others there can be one of three results:

- Each one would hold on to his own creations and sovereignty
- Some of them would eventually overcome others
- All of them would be subservient to one sovereign or one God, who would have complete control over them.

The arrangement of the heavenly and earthly worlds, their interrelation and their operation according to a precise system that neither changes nor becomes corrupted is the strongest evidence that there is a single manager, besides whom there is no other deity. As it is impossible to have two equal creators for the world, it is impossible to have two objects of worship. This is but a portion of the evidence attesting to the soundness of what the Prophet of God, Muhammad ﷺ, conveyed regarding the oneness of divinity.

One Lord, who alone is worthy of worship, is what is most acceptable to intelligent minds. This stands out against claims that God is part of a trinity or that idols can share His divinity and His right to be worshipped alone. So, what can be greater than this crystal clear concept of monotheism, which was unknown at the time the Prophet of Mercy ﷺ was sent to humanity? And what belief about God is more compatible with the sound intellect than this one?

Tolerance and Coexistence Among People

Muhammad ﷺ laid the foundations for tolerance among people. In the *Qur'an*, Allah ﷻ revealed to His Prophet ﷺ that there must be no compulsion in the acceptance of religion. Muhammad ﷺ also clarified rights of the non-Muslims who do not wage war against Muslims, and guaranteed protection of their lives, children, property and honor. Even today, there are Jewish and Christian citizens living in peace and security in many Muslim countries; quite different from the Spanish Inquisitions in which Muslims and others were exterminated in an ethnic cleansing that violated all the humanitarian principles asserted by western culture.

Among the greatest principles of religion brought by Muhammad ﷺ, the Prophet of Mercy, was that acceptance of Islam, whether by individuals or groups, is left to personal conviction, and that invitation to it is based upon wisdom and good advice, not on compulsion by the sword or any other means. This is mentioned in many places in the *Qur'an* and in the prophetic teachings (*Sunnah*). For example, Allah ﷻ said in the *Qur'an*:

"There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion. The right course has become clear from the wrong. So whoever disbelieves in false objects of worship and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy

handhold with no break in it. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing." (2:256)

And He said:

"And say, 'The truth is from your Lord, so whoever wills – let him believe; and whoever wills – let him disbelieve.'" (18:29)

Additionally, the religion conveyed by Muhammad was concerned about non-Muslims. It prohibited killing them outside of battle and actually allowed for righteousness and kindness toward them. For the *Qur'an* states:

"Allah does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes – from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly." (60:8)

And among the greatest principles established by Islam is respect for the rights of non-Muslims, whether they are under the protection of an Islamic state or outside of it, as long as they do not declare war against Islam or Muslims. Each of them has rights that must be upheld by all Muslims just as they protect themselves, their properties, their women and their children. No Muslim is permitted to transgress against them in any way. The Messenger of Allah said,

"He who kills one protected under a treaty will not smell the fragrance of Paradise. And indeed, its fragrance is found from the distance of forty years [of travel]."[9]

And he ﷺ said,

"Surely, a person who wrongs one protected under a treaty or belittles him, overworks him or takes something from him against his will, I will be his opponent on the Day of Resurrection."[10]

In fact, Muslims and non-Muslims are equal before the judge in a court of law. *Al-Ash`ath* reported:

"*There was a dispute between me and a Jewish man over a piece of land, so I took him to the Prophet ﷺ, blessings and peace be upon him, who said, 'Do you have any evidence?' I said, 'No.'* He said to *the Jew, 'Swear an oath.' I said, 'O Messenger of Allah ﷺ, when he swears to it he will take my property.'*

Thereupon, Allah revealed the verse:

"Indeed, those who exchange the covenant of Allah and their oaths for a small price will have no share in the Hereafter, and Allah will not speak to them or look at them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them; and they will have a painful punishment." (3:77)[11]

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[9] Narrated by *al-Bukhari*.
[10] Narrated by *Abu Dawud.*
[11] Narrated by *Abu Dawud.*

This condition has continued in Muslim lands up to the present day. Jews, Christians and followers of other religions have lived in Muslim regions enjoying security, justice and tolerance seldom found elsewhere. The mass extermination of members of a particular race or religion, as still witnessed in some countries, is further evidence of the value of what Islam offered to others. Conversely, Muslims have suffered greatly as objects of ethnic cleansing and religious persecution; the most infamous of them being the Spanish Inquisitions. They did not even spare Christians of other denominations, not to mention Jews and others, who subsequently found a secure refuge in various Muslim lands.

Comprehensive Mercy

Muhammad ﷺ was a mercy sent by God to all peoples regardless of their race or faith. In fact, his teachings included mercy to all creatures and forbade harming them without right or reason. The Prophet's mercy ﷺ also extended beyond humanity, to birds and animals. He ﷺ ordered kindness to them and warned those who torment or harm them of the punishment of Hellfire in the Hereafter. He ﷺ prohibited making birds and other living creatures targets to shoot at, saying,

"Do not take anything in which has a soul as a target."[12]

And he ﷺ said,

"A woman entered the Hellfire on account of a cat. She confined it and neither fed it nor allowed it to eat from the grass of the earth."[13]

He ﷺ also said,

"While a dog was circling a well about to die of thirst, a prostitute from the Children of Israel saw him, removed her shoe and let him drink from it, so Allah forgave her."[14]

And he ﷺ said,

"While a man was walking he became very thirsty, so he descended into a well and drank from it. When he came

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[12] Narrated by Muslim.
[13] Narrated by *Al-Bukhari*.
[14] Narrated by *Al-Bukhari*.

out, he found a dog panting and eating the soil due to thirst. He said, 'This creature is suffering what I suffered,' so, he went down again, filled his shoe and climbed up holding it in his mouth to give drink to the dog. Allah appreciated that from him and forgave his sin." His companions asked, "O Messenger of Allah ﷺ, is there a reward in [kindness to] animals?" He ﷺ replied,

"In every living creature is reward."[15]

The Prophet ﷺ prohibited confining animals in order to later kill them with arrows or spears. Once, he passed a camel showing signs of starvation and said,

"Fear Allah concerning these dumb beasts. Ride them while they are healthy and eat them while they are healthy."[16]

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[15] Narrated by *Al-Bukhari*.
[16] Narrated by *Abu Dawud*.

Respect and Appreciation for All Prophets

Muhammad ﷺ showed unparalleled respect for and appreciation of all the prophets who preceded him; among them were Abraham, Moses and Jesus (peace be upon them all). Allah ﷻ revealed to him words to the effect that one who denies or disrespects any of the prophets cannot be a Muslim. Islam regards all of the prophets as one brotherhood, inviting people to the belief that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah, alone, without associates.

Muhammad ﷺ spoke affectionately of his brethren, the prophets and messengers, referring to some as "the righteous servant" or "my brother." He directed his followers to respect and revere them all, and prohibited them from considering him better than any one of them. Even more important are the abundant words, which Allah ﷻ revealed in the *Qur'an* in praise of the former prophets and messengers, and ordering Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to take them as role models. This confirms the brotherhood of the prophets as well as the great appreciation of the final one for previous ones; his respect for and praise of them. In fact, Allah ﷻ made the accounts of earlier prophets a comfort for Prophet Muhammad ﷺ during the abuse and exhaustion he sustained while calling people to Islam.

Here are some texts confirming the aforementioned:

Allah has said:

Those are the ones whom Allah has guided, so from their guidance take an example. Say, "I ask of you for it [i.e., this message] no payment. It is not but a reminder for the worlds." (6:90)

And He said:

"The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and so have the believers. All of them believed in Allah and His angels and His books and His messengers, [saying], "We make no distinction between any of His messengers." And they say, "We hear, and we obey. [We seek] Your forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the [final] destination." (2:285)

An entire chapter of the *Qur'an* is named "*Al-Anbiyaa*" (The Prophets). After mentioning a good number of them and some of their outstanding attributes, Allah concluded by saying:

"Indeed, they used to hasten to good deeds and supplicate Us in hope and fear, and they were to Us humbly submissive." (21:90)

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ declared,

"I am the closest of people to Jesus, Son of Mary, in this world and the next. The prophets are brothers; their mothers are different but their religion is one."[17]

And he ﷺ added,

"I say as the righteous servant (i.e., Jesus) said: 'I was a witness over them as long as I was among them.'"[18]

He ﷺ also said,

"I remembered the saying of my brother, [Prophet] Solomon, 'My Lord, forgive me and grant me a kingdom such as will not belong to anyone after me. Indeed, You are the Bestower.'" (38:35)[19]

This is the positive attitude of the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* (prophetic teachings) regarding the prophets and messengers of God. In reality, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ informed all Muslims through revelation from Allah ﷻ that someone who rejects any one of the former prophets is not a Muslim. This is attested to as follows:

"Indeed, those who disbelieve in Allah and His messengers and wish to discriminate between Allah and His messengers and say, "We believe in some and disbelieve in others," and wish to adopt a way in between – those are the disbelievers,

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[17] Narrated by *al-Bukhari*.

[18] Narrated by *al-Bukhari*. The *Qur'anic* reference is 5:117

[19] Narrated by *al-Bukhari*.

truly." (4:150-151)

In addition, we find in the *Qur'an* condemnation of those Jews who killed and maligned prophets:

"We had already taken the covenant of the Children of Israel and had sent to them messengers. Whenever there came to them a messenger with what their souls did not desire, a party [of messengers] they denied, and another party they killed." (5:70)

Allah also revealed:

"They have been put under humiliation wherever they are overtaken, except for a rope [i.e., covenant] from Allah and a rope [i.e., treaty] from the people. And they have drawn upon themselves anger from Allah and have been put under destitution. That is because they rejected the verses of Allah and killed the prophets without right. That is because they disobeyed and [habitually] transgressed." (3:112)

The Protection of Human Rights

Muhammad ﷺ defended human rights for males and females, young and old, regardless of social status. He established a set of sublime principles; a prime example being in the speech he ﷺ delivered during his farewell pilgrimage wherein he ﷺ declared strict prohibition of transgression against people's lives, property and honor. These principles he laid down long before the world knew of the Magna Charta of 1215, the Declaration of Rights of 1628, the Personal Freedoms Law of 1679, the American Declaration of Independence of 1776, the Human and Citizen Rights Charter of 1789 or the worldwide Declaration of Human Rights of 1948.

The principles of human rights established by the Islamic *Shari`ah* (legal system) preceded all other human rights declarations by many centuries, and extended protection to animals, plants and the general environment as one of the branches of faith. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ stated,

"Faith is seventy some branches, the highest of which is [witnessing] that there is no deity [worthy of worship] but Allah and the least of which is the removal of something harmful from the road."[20]

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[20] Narrated by *al-Bukhari* and *Muslim*.

Similarly, he prohibited relieving oneself in shady places where people stop to rest. Some other general rulings in this area are:

1. Protection of Human Life – Islam introduced such legislation as:

• Prohibition of taking a life without legal right, regarding it as grave a sin as the killing of all mankind. Allah ﷻ said in the *Qur'an*:

"Whoever kills a soul unless for a soul[21] *or for corruption [done] in the land*[22] *– it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one – it is as if he had saved mankind entirely."* (5:32)

• Prohibition of suicide – The Prophet ﷺ said,

"Whoever kills himself by throwing himself from a mountain will be throwing himself from it in the Hellfire eternally, and whoever kills himself by drinking poison will have the poison in his hand, drinking it in the Hellfire."[23]

• Prevention of the means that lead to killing – The Prophet ﷺ said,

"Whoever points a weapon at us is not from among us."[24]

[21] i.e., as legal retribution for murder.
[22] i.e., that requiring the death penalty.
[23] Narrated by *al-Bukhari* and *Muslim*.
[24] Narrated by *al-Bukhari* and *Muslim*.

• Prohibition of threat and terrorism, even in jest.

• Prohibition of harm, even potential harm – The Prophet ﷺ ordered those who passed through a marketplace carrying arrows to cover them to prevent injury. He ﷺ said,

"Whoever passes through one of our mosques or markets with arrows should hold them at their heads to let no Muslim be wounded by him."[25]

The prophetic sayings prohibiting harm and ordering its cessation are numerous, such as:

"Whoever points a sword at his brother, the angels curse him, even if it should be his brother from his father and mother."[26]

And he considered refraining from harming others to be among the rights of [those on] the road which a Muslim is obligated to respect.[27]

2. Protection of the Mind

• Prohibition of whatever corrupts the mind physically, as when the Prophet ﷺ said,

"Every intoxicant affects the mind and everything that affects the mind is forbidden."[28]

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[25] Narrated by *al-Bukhari*.
[26] Narrated by *Muslim*.
[27] Narrated by *al-Bukhari*.
[28] Narrated by *Muslim*.

And prohibition of whatever corrupts the mind mentally, such as doctrines of superstition, hoaxes, blind imitation of others or refusal to reason logically.

3. Protection of Lineage

• Encouragement of marriage – The Prophet ﷺ said,

"O company of youths, whoever of you is able to marry should marry."[29]

• Prohibition of killing children and of abortion – Allah ﷻ said:

"And do not kill your children." (17:31)

Islam forbade the killing of a fetus or aborting it unless there is a definite danger to the mother's life.

4. Protection of Chastity and Honor

• Prohibition of fornication and adultery with confirmation of a legal punishment for it – Allah ﷻ said:

"And do not approach unlawful sexual intercourse. Indeed, it is ever an immorality and is evil as a way." (17:32)

And He said: *"The woman or man found guilty of fornication – lash each one of them with a hundred lashes."* (24:2)

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[29] Narrated by *al-Bukhari* and *Muslim*.

• Prohibition of false accusation with confirmation of punishment for it – Allah said:

"Indeed, those who [falsely] accuse chaste, unaware and believing women are cursed in this world and the Hereafter; and they will have a great punishment." (24:23)

And He said:

"And those who accuse chaste women and then do not produce four witnesses – lash them with eighty lashes and do not accept from them testimony ever after. And those are the defiantly disobedient." (24:4)

And the Prophet said,

"Avoid the seven major sins," and mentioned among them the false accusation of chaste, unaware, believing women.

• Instructing the avoidance of suspicious situations so that conduct and morals will not be suspect.

5. Protection of Property

• Enjoinment of moderation in spending - Allah, the Mighty and Majestic said:

"And do not make your hand [as] chained to your neck [refusing to spend] or extend it completely [being extravagant] and thereby become blamed and insolvent." (17:29)

• Legislative measures concerning transgression against people's wealth and property

• Commandments to guard the properties of orphans and weak members of society

• Prohibition of interest, usury and taking the wealth of others under false pretenses

6. Upholding the Honor of Women

• Strong advocation by the Prophet ﷺ for the care of women – Numerous instructions were given by him in this regard, such as his saying,

"You are advised to be good to women,"[30] and, *"The best of you are the best of you to their wives, and I am the best of you to my wives."*[31]

• Affirmation that women are equal in humanity to men – The Prophet ﷺ said,

"Women are the sisters of men."[32]

• Participation of women with men in religious rites and social work – Allah ﷻ said:

"The believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, establish prayer, give zakah, and obey Allah and His

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[30] Narrated by *al-Bukhari*.
[31] Narrated by *at-Tirmidhi*.
[32] Narrated by *Abu Dawud* and *at-Tirmidhi*.

Messenger. Those – Allah will have mercy upon them. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise." (9:71)

• Granting women the right to learning and education – several sources confirm that an educated woman among the companions taught writing to the Prophet's ﷺ wife, *Hafsah bint Umar*. His acknowledgement of that points to his approval of women's education since he made his own household a practical example for others.

• Granting women financial rights – Islam established for them the right to inheritance and gave them preference over men in their right to a marriage dowry and maintenance, even when wealthy. It also upheld their right to buy, sell, rent and to give gifts and charities.

An Invitation to Noble Manners

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ elevated the importance of morality in human life. He ﷺ called for good manners, honesty, loyalty and chastity, and strengthened social bonds such as being dutiful to parents and relatives while always putting into practice what he preached. He ﷺ prohibited and warned against such negative behaviors as lying, envy, betrayal, fornication and disrespect of parents, and he ﷺ treated problems stemming from these diseases.

Allahﷻ praised His Prophet ﷺ in the *Qur'an*, saying:

"And indeed, you are of a great moral character." (68:4)

Even before his prophethood, he ﷺ was known as "the Trustworthy" due to his truthfulness and honesty. And when he emigrated from *Makkah*, he ﷺ did not forget to make *Ali bin Abi Talib* ؓ responsible for returning all the possessions entrusted to him by their owners; some of whom were among the disbelievers of *Quraysh* that had expelled him from his homeland.

Thus, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ always called for excellent character and encouraged it by speaking of the promise of reward. In fact, some of the many *Qur'anic* verses promoting good morals were the cause of a number of *Makkans*' acceptance of Islam. In the Prophet's ﷺ biography, it is mentioned that he ﷺ recited Allah's words to two messengers from one of the tribal leaders:

"Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded." (16:90)

They returned to their chief and said,

"*He spoke to us some words,*" and when they repeated them to their leader, he said,

"*I see that he enjoins noble manners and prohibits bad ones.*"

Among the moral principles mentioned in the *Qur'an* are the following words of Allah ﷻ:

- *Is the reward for good [anything] but good* ? (55:60)
- *And speak to people what is good.* (2:83)
- *And do not forget graciousness between you.* (2:237)
- *Show lenience, enjoin what is good, and turn away from the ignorant. And if an evil suggestion comes to you from Satan, then seek refuge in Allah. Indeed, He is Hearing and Knowing.* (7:199-200)

The moral principles mentioned in the Prophet's ﷺ statements offer solutions to many of the psychological and social problems faced by those who have distanced themselves from his guidance. These he conveyed to people as a mercy for them, as instruction and salvation from distress in this world and from punishment in the Hereafter. Among them are:

- *The strong one is not he who knocks the other down; the strong one is he who controls himself when angry.*[33]
- *Do not get angry.* (He ﷺ repeated this several times to one who sought his advice.)[34]
- *He who is not thankful to people is not thankful to Allah.*[35]

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[33] Narrated by *al-Bukhari*.
[34] Narrated by *al-Bukhari*.
[35] Narrated by *Ahmad* and others.

- *Among the best of you are those best in manners.*[36]
- *None of you [truly] believes until he likes for his brother what he likes for himself.*[37]

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[36] Narrated by *al-Bukhari* and *Muslim*.
[37] Narrated by *al-Bukhari*.

An Invitation to Thought and Obtaining Knowledge

Through divine revelation, Muhammad ﷺ invited people to use their minds, to discover the universe around them and to acquire knowledge. He confirmed that Allah ﷻ rewards such deeds at a time when scientists and intellectuals in other civilizations were suffering persecution and accusations of heresy and blasphemy, being terrorized in prisons, tortured and often killed.

The first verse revealed to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was:

"Recite in the name of your Lord who created." (96:1)

Allah ﷻ also revealed*:*

"Say, 'Are those who know equal to those who do not know?' Only they will remember who are people of understanding." (39:9)

"Allah will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge, by degrees." (58:11)

And further, the scripture revealed to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ alludes to a number of scientific facts. This is part of its miraculous nature since such information could not have been authored by an unlettered Prophet ﷺ who could neither read nor write. In truth, it was impossible that he could have even known them at that time – such facts as the existence of an invisible barrier between bodies of fresh and salt water, the immensity of the stars and the three layers of darkness in a woman's womb. These and many other

facts have been registered by scholars as being among the miracles of the *Qur'an*, and have been assisted in this by non-Muslim scientists. They are available in publications, on cassettes, etc. Additionally, the Prophet ﷺ mentioned some others, such as the formation of the fetus in the mother's womb.

How, then, is it possible for anyone to think that a prophet to whom God revealed such information could have been against scholarship or opposed scholars? Knowledge spread during the centuries of Islamic civilization only because the religion of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ encouraged and advanced it. Moreover, it considers a whole community blameworthy if it neglects a branch of knowledge required by its members.

In contrast, and centuries after Muhammad's ﷺ mission, we find many scientists and pioneers in scholarship condemned by the Church, accused of opposing the Lord's will and of unbelief as a result of their discoveries and scientific findings, as was the case of Galileo and others before him. Their work was not acknowledged until many lives had been lost and many free thinkers had been imprisoned, something that never happened in the Islamic civilization established by Muhammad ﷺ, the Prophet of Mercy.

A Balance Between The Needs of the Soul and the Body

Muhammad ﷺ came with a revelation from Allah ﷻ, presenting a religion compatible with human nature – one satisfying the needs of the soul as well as those of the body, and establishing a balance between worldly deeds and those done for the Hereafter. It is a religion which disciplines human instincts and desires without suppressing them completely as in some other cultures which became obsessed with ideals contrary to human nature, depriving religious men given to worship of such natural human rights as marriage and of such natural reactions as anger toward transgression, expecting them not even to defend themselves against aggressors. This led most members of those societies to reject religious teachings and become absorbed in the material world which caters only to their bodies while leaving their souls in a miserable state.

Indeed, the one who sent Muhammad ﷺ with the message of Islam is none other than Allah ﷻ, the Creator of all people. He ﷻ knows what is best for them and what is compatible with their natures, tendencies, abilities and needs. Human nature will not remain upright unless it is satisfied or appeased, and it will not remain upright when confronted with opposition. This nature, when perverted or corrupted, will damage and destabilize man's life on earth and cause incurable psychological and social diseases to appear. This is what

has actually happened in many parts of the earth, in societies that promote such forms of opposition to sound and upright human nature as renouncing marriage, monastic abstention, homosexuality, seclusion from society, excessive materialism or pursuit of physical gratification without regard for spiritual needs and requirements.

Anyone who contemplates the Islamic religious teachings conveyed from Allah ﷻ through Prophet Muhammad ﷺ will notice a balance in the various aspects of human life: between the need of the physical body for food and drink, marriage and personal rights, the need of the soul for worship and moral purification and the need of the intellect for knowledge, research and discovery.

Islam has set a comprehensive balance for all of these without exceeding limits in any aspect. And it confirmed this by prohibiting excess and immoderation just as it prohibited disregard and neglect. It orders moderation in all situations and its legislation was established for the realization of these aims. It clarifies limits which are not inconsistent with human nature and the role for which man was created: the service of Allah ﷻ and development of the earth in beneficial ways. Islamic law permits everything that has potential benefit for mankind and prohibits everything harmful or detrimental to human life regarding one's mind, body and property.

The following are some of the significant verses revealed to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Allah said:

"And He subjected to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth – all from Him. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought." (45:13)

So Allah did not create this universe to remain neglected without yield or for its inhabitants to be indifferent to it. The words "subjected to you" express the meanings of subjugation, facilitation and discovery in this universe in order to benefit from its elements and its wealth.

He also said:

"Seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter; but do not forget your share of the world. And do good as Allah has done good to you. And desire not corruption in the land. Indeed, Allah does not like corrupters." (28:77)

And He described His righteous servants as:

"Men whom neither commerce nor sale distracts from the remembrance of Allah and performance of prayer and giving of zakah."[38] (24:37)

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[38] An annual expenditure for the benefit of the Islamic community required of those Muslims who have excess wealth.

Even when involved in business, they do not forget spiritual and moral duties due to fear of the account before Allah in the Hereafter. Imagine the conduct of these businessmen with this kind of belief and moral character, and how life in its every aspect would be among such people. History bears witness to the fact that the likes of these Muslim traders were the cause of Islam's spread into many vast and distant regions, like Indonesia and Sudan, without military conquest, contrary to the claims of those who fail to study history adequately.

Allah also said:

"And We placed in the hearts of those who followed him [i.e., Jesus] compassion and mercy and monasticism, which they innovated; We did not prescribe it for them except [that they did so] seeking the approval of Allah. But they did not observe it with due observance." (57:27)

But Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, presented the most splendid examples and directives concerning the balance between spirituality and materialism. He would become extremely angry with those who opposed the inborn human nature and traditions of the prophets and messengers. Once, he heard that some people, out of keenness to worship Allah, had taken an oath to refrain from sleep, from marriage and from food and drink. His position toward them was strict

determination to uphold the balance he had been charged to teach. *Anas bin Malik* ﷺ reported:

"Three members of the Prophet's ﷺ wives' families came asking about the worship of the Prophet ﷺ, and when they were informed they seemed to consider it little, and said, 'How can we compare to the Prophet ﷺ when Allah ﷻ has forgiven his previous and future errors?' So one of them said, 'As for me, I will pray all the night.' Another said, 'As for me, I will fast every day and not break my fast.' The third said, 'As for me, I will avoid women and never marry.' When the Prophet ﷺ arrived he asked, 'Are you the ones who said so and so? I swear, I am the most conscious and fearing of Allah among you, but I fast and break my fast, I pray and sleep, and I marry women. And whoever refuses my *Sunnah* (instruction and example) is not of me."[39]

He ﷺ also encouraged work and affirmed that it is the best source of income. He ﷺ said,

"No one has eaten better food than that earned by the work of his own hands, and Allah's prophet, David (peace be upon him) used to eat from the work of his hands."[40]

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[39] Narrated by *al-Bukhari* and *Muslim*.
[40] Narrated by *al-Bukhari*.

The Brotherhood of All Human Beings

Muhammad ﷺ presented to the world a perfect model of brotherhood among human beings. He ﷺ taught that no race is superior to another, for all are equal in origin and equal in their responsibilities and rights. One's degree of faith and piety is the only criterion for preference. His companions were given equal opportunities to belong to and serve the religion. Among them were *Suhayb* ؓ, a Byzantine, *Bilal* ؓ, an Abyssinian, and *Salman* ؓ, a Persian, all working side by side with their brothers among the Arabs.

Muhammad ﷺ lived in a society dominated by class discrimination based on wealth, ethnicity and race. This was not particular to the Arabian Peninsula, but was the general condition of the world at large at that time. Hence, we can perceive the immense transition that Muhammad ﷺ effected among the Arabs and other inhabitants of the earth through the revelation he conveyed from his Lord. It called for brotherhood and equality among human beings and made clear that what distinguishes one person from another is none but righteousness, morality, benefit and good deeds; and that one's appearance, color or race has no role in this preference.

The Arabs used to enslave those born free either by the sword in battle or by deception and betrayal. The slave was considered to be no more than a possession with which

the owner could do as he pleased. If he decided to kill him, he would not be blamed or criticized for it, and female slaves were forced to practice prostitution to increase the owner's income. Slaves were driven like cattle to hard labor while no objection was ever raised by them since they knew that this was the law and the normal course of life.

Transition was effected in that culture by Muhammad ﷺ through revelation from Allah when he declared openly and decisively that the then prevalent system of discrimination was annulled. Allah revealed the following in this regard:

"O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted." (49:13)

And He affirmed a single origin for all of mankind in many verses of the noble *Qur'an*, such as:

"Certainly did We create man from an extract of clay" (23:12)

and:

"It is He who created you from clay and then decreed a term [of life] and a specified time [for resurrection] to Him; then you are [still] in dispute." (6:2)

The final Prophet ﷺ declared,

"O mankind, unquestionably your Lord is one and your common ancestor is one. There is no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab or for a non-Arab over an Arab; neither is there for a white over a black nor for a black over a white, except by righteousness."[41]

And he ﷺ said,

"People are the children of Adam, and Adam was [created] from dust."[42]

[41] Narrated by *Ahmad*.
[42] Narrated by *at-Tirmidhi*.

In conclusion:

Each of the aforementioned points actually requires greater detail and explanation. The evidences confirming what Muhammad ﷺ offered to humanity are much more than can be mentioned in this brief publication. There is also a great deal that has been said about him by objective researchers from the East and the West after they studied the biography of this great Prophet ﷺ . Their testimonies are based solely on objective research of the kind which results in the acquisition of precise facts.

For further information please visit the website of the International Program for Introducing the Prophet of Mercyﷺ:

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